

Abstract 559

TITLE: Message Framing and HIV Testing in LowIncome Women

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BACKGROUND: This study investigated the effectiveness of differentially framed messages designed to encourage lowincome women living in public housing developments or visiting a community health center to obtain an HIV test. Specifically, we examined the influence of systematically different educational videos that were either gain or loss-framed, emphasizing either the benefits of being screened or costs of not being screened for HIV. Because HIV testing is a detection behavior, we predicted that lossframed messages would be more persuasive than gain-framed messages (Rothman & Salovey, 1997).

METHODS: One hundred-ninety women completed a baseline interview and watched one of the differently framed videos aimed at persuading women to get an HIV test. Three months later, 145 women (76%) completed a follow up aimed at obtaining HIV testing rates. Sixty-four percent of the women were African American (N=121), 25% Hispanic (N=47), and 10% White (N=19). Eighty-seven percent had a high school diploma or less education.

RESULTS: Overall, 30% of the women who completed followup obtained an HIV test within 3 months. Women who saw gainframed videos (37%) were more likely to get an HIV test than women who saw loss-framed videos (22%). To identify whether message framing predicted HIV testing at follow-up, we examined previous HIV testing behavior and framing (gain/loss) using a stepwise logistic regression analysis. Both previous HIV testing behavior ($b=.17$, $se=.06$, $OR=1.18$, 95% $CI=1.05, 1.33$, $p<.005$) and framing ($b=.81$, $se=.39$, $OR=2.26$, 95% $CI=1.04, 4.89$, $p<.05$) significantly predicted whether women obtained an HIV test within 3 months after baseline.

CONCLUSIONS: Contrary to Rothman and Salovey's (1997) predictions, women were more likely to get an HIV test following exposure to a gainframed video. In retrospect, although the videos depict HIV testing as a detection behavior, they also emphasize getting an HIV test as a prevention behavior-preventing the spread of HIV to partners and children and in our past work prevention behaviors have been better promoted with gainframed messages. Subsequent experiments will examine whether women who construe HIV testing as primarily serving prevention goals are more influenced by gainframed messages than women who construe HIV testing as primarily serving the goal of early detection for the purpose of medical treatment.

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